

Why Do Radical Muslims Hate Us?

What would motivate two young Muslims to blow up innocent men, women and children? What did America do to deserve such an outpouring of irrational, blind hatred? In the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings, it is clear that most Americans still do not understand the ideology of radical Islam.

Bill O'Reilly noted that America had been very kind to the Tsarnaev family and wondered how they could have paid back our generosity with such barbaric acts of terror. America is a great, open-hearted country that welcomed this immigrant family and made the American dream accessible to them. Now they kill and maim our people?

More than two decades ago, Daniel Coleman, an American intelligence agent, wondered what it was that fueled the fires of an obscure Islamic radical name Osama bin Laden. Reading one of bin Laden's writings, Coleman observed that "one of the striking features of the document was that time seemed to have stopped a thousand years ago. There was now and there was then, but there was nothing in between. It was as if the Crusades were still going on in bin Laden's universe. The intensity of the anger was also difficult for Coleman to grasp. What did we do to him? he wondered" (as recounted by Lawrence Wright in *The Looming Tower*).

As Coleman was to learn, and as all of America should have learned by now, in the eyes of radical Muslims, America has done much to deserve such wrath.

First, America's wars in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan are considered to be Western intrusions into the Muslim world, power-grabbing moves aimed at world domination, sometimes motivated by greed (meaning oil), always motivated by a sense

of the superiority of American democracy.

What we view as wars of liberation at the cost of precious American lives, they view as acts of exploitation, as murderous incursions that are wiping out hundreds of thousands, if not millions of their people. (I am not supporting these views; I am simply stating how radical Muslims view us.)

How many Iraqi and Afghani citizens have been killed by American bombs? they would ask. *How many innocent Muslim men, women and children have been slaughtered?* They will now inflict that same terror on us, not by dropping bombs on us from the air (since they don't have the capability to do so) but by planting bombs on our busy city streets.

Second, while Israel is known as the Little Satan in the radical Islamic world, America is called the Great Satan—and not only because of our support for Israel (although that is obviously one of our greatest evils in their eyes). We are seen as the champion of Western decadence, the chief exporter of sexual immorality to the rest of the world. (Tragically, the Muslim world in general sees this as the fruit of Christianity, since America is perceived as a “Christian nation,” whereas the reality is that we have a great and wonderful Christian heritage but have largely departed from it.)

In a *USA Today* interview in 1997, Islamic radicals in Egypt expressed their views: “They cite figures on the divorce rate in the United States. They point to crime and drug use. They talk about America’s preoccupation with sex. ‘You will never find these things where true Islam exists,’ argues Ziad Ali, 34. ‘Islam is the only answer, not Christianity, not Judaism, not Buddha. Without it, America is going to hell.’ He points to a young Muslim woman ... who is fully clothed from head to toe and even wearing gloves ... ‘That is how a woman must dress, not the way they dress in America, in Britain,’ Ali says. ‘In

America, your women dress like harlots. They have no dignity. We want to change that here in Egypt so our harlots don't go to hell.'" (Cited in my book *Revolution*.)

They see Islamic dress as preserving the dignity of their women; we see it as suffocating and oppressive. They see Shariah laws that call for the beheading of adulterers as safeguarding the honor of marriage; we see them as primitive and barbaric. (Is it any surprise that the media is now reporting that Tamerlan Tsarnaev was married and that his wife is an American convert to Islam who wears a black hijab?)

Third, young, radicalized Muslims love death the way Americans love life, being taught that martyrdom for the cause of Allah guarantees them entry into the heavenly kingdom, replete with 70 virgins (per man!) and many other sumptuous pleasures. In contrast, even the most devout Muslim in the world is not guaranteed acceptance into paradise, since he might somehow have fallen short of the mark.

And if, in fact, there is a connection between the Boston bombings and Chechnyan Muslims, the tradition of martyrdom is very relevant, as General Mashkadov, a Muslim leader of the breakaway republic, commented on the tenacity of his troops in the late 1990s as they fought against Russia: "I can only wonder at the strength with which my men fight ... All we can do is fight on, to show not only that we want our independence, but that we are willing to die for it."

Fourth, our killing of Osama bin Laden is viewed as the cold-blooded murder of one of their most revered leaders. If Islamic soldiers assassinated one of our greatest heroes, how would we respond?

And so, bin Laden may be dead, but radical Islam is far from dead. It will not be defeated by our best human efforts but by the gospel of Jesus, proclaimed and lived out in the power of the Spirit.

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